London County Council.

THE INSPECTION OF MILK AND MEAT.

REPORT by the medical officer on the statements of deputations who attended before the Public Health Committee, on 3rd November, 1898, on the question of the proposed abolition of private slaughterhouses in London, and on the representations subsequently made to the Committee on the subject.

(*Printed by order of the Public Health Committee, 10th November*, 1898.)

The chairman of the Public Health Committee has instructed me to report on the statements made by the several gentlemen who, on the 3rd instant, addressed the Committee on behalf of the meat and cattle section of the London Chamber of Commerce, the Butchers' Trade Society, the Central Meat and Poultry Markets Association, and the Metropolitan Cattle and Sheep Trade Association.

It is desirable, in the first instance, to indicate the effect of the adoption by the Council of the recommendations embodied in the report of the Committee, which is now before the Council, and for this purpose to state briefly the reasons which have led the Committee to make those recommendations, which are as follows—

"(*a*) That in the opinion of the Council it is desirable that, as a first step towards ensuring the proper inspection of meat, private slaughterhouses should cease to exist in London, and that butchers should in substitution be afforded such facilities as are necessary for the killing of animals in public slaughterhouses to be erected by the Council.

"(*b*) That a copy of this report and of the Council's resolution thereon be sent to the Local Government Board, with an intimation that the Council is prepared to accept such responsibilities as may be necessary to give effect in London to the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis, and that the Board be asked whether they will include in any legislation introduced by them in connection with the Royal Commission's report the provisions which would be necessary for this purpose."

In 1890 a Royal Commission was appointed "to inquire and report what is the effect, if any, of food derived from tuberculous animals on human health, and, if prejudicial, what are the circumstances and conditions with regard to the tuberculosis in the animal which produce that effect upon man."

The conclusions at which this Royal Commission arrived may be best stated in their own words—

Recapitulation.

77. To recapitulate the information we have obtained from the witnesses who favoured us with their experience, and from the researches of our three enquirers, together with our own conclusions:—

We have obtained ample evidence that food derived from tuberculous animals can produce tuberculosis in healthy animals. The proportion of animals contracting tuberculosis after experimental use of such food, is different in one and another class of animals; both carnivora and herbivora are susceptible, and the proportion is high in pigs. In the absence of direct experiments on human subjects, we infer that man also can acquire tuberculosis by feeding upon materials derived from tuberculous food-animals.

78. The actual amount of tuberculous disease among certain classes of food-animals is so large as to afford to man frequent occasions for contracting tuberculous disease through his food. As to the proportion of tuberculosis acquired by man through his food or through other means, we can form no definite opinion, but we think it probable that an appreciable part of the tuberculosis that affects man is obtained through his food.

79. The circumstances and conditions with regard to the tuberculosis in the food-animal which lead to the production of tuberculosis in man are, ultimately, the presence of active tuberculous matter in the food taken from the animal and consumed by the man in a raw or insufficiently cooked state.

80. Tuberculous disease is observed most frequently in cattle and in swine. It is found far more frequently in cattle (full grown) than in calves, and with much greater frequency in cows kept in town cow-houses than in cattle bred for the express purpose of slaughter. Tuberculous matter is but seldom found in the meat substance of the carcase, it is principally found in the organs, membranes and glands. There is reason to believe that tuberculous matter, when present in meat sold to the public, is more commonly due to the contamination of the surface of the meat with material derived from other diseased parts, than to disease of the meat itself. The same matter is found in the milk of cows when the udder has become invaded by tuberculous disease, and seldom or never when the udder is not diseased. Tuberculous matter in milk is exceptionally active in its operation upon animals fed either with the milk or with dairy produce derived from it. No doubt the largest part of the tuberculosis which man obtains through his food is by means of milk containing tuberculous matter.

81. The recognition of tuberculous disease during the life of an animal is not wholly unattended with difficulty. Happily, however, it can in most cases be detected with certainty in the udders of milch cows.

82. Provided every part that is the seat of tuberculous matter be avoided and destroyed, and provided care be taken to save from contamination by such matter the actual meat substance of a tuberculous animal, a great deal of meat from animals affected by tuberculosis may be eaten without risk to the consumer.

83. Ordinary processes of cooking applied to meat which has got contaminated on its surface are probably sufficient to destroy the harmful quality. They would not avail to render wholesome any piece of meat that contained tuberculous matter in its deeper parts. In regard to milk we are aware of the preference by English people for drinking cows' milk raw, a practice attended by danger, on account of possible contamination by pathogenic organisms. The boiling of milk, even for a moment, would probably be sufficient to remove the very dangerous quality of tuberculous milk.

The instruction to this Commission did not extend to enquiry or report on administrative procedures available and desirable for controlling the danger to man through the use as food of the meat and milk of tuberculous animals, and hence in 1896 a second Royal Commission was appointed for this purpose.

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The principal recommendations of this second Commission are shown in the Committee's report now before the Council. It will suffice here to indicate the administration which would be required in London to give effect to these recommendations.

Milk.

The subject of milk may be most conveniently discussed first, because not a single objection to the recommendations relating to milk has been brought to the knowledge of the Committee.

The extreme danger to the milk consumer of tuberculous milk is insisted upon throughout the report of the first Commission: thus a statement of Dr. Martin, who was employed by the Commission in experimental inquiry, is quoted, "the milk of cows with tuberculosis of the udder possesses a virulence which can only be described as extraordinary." It is not, fortunately, the fact that the milk of every cow having tuberculous disease of other parts than the udder is virulent. Indeed the Commission state "according to our experience, then, the condition required for ensuring to the milk of tuberculous cows the ability to produce tuberculosis in the consumers of their milk, is *tuberculous disease of the cow affecting the udder.* It should be noted that this affection of the udder is not peculiar to tuberculosis in an advanced stage, but may be found also in mild cases." The Commission, however, later state, "the withdrawal from dairies of every cow that had any disease whatever of the udder would form some approach to security against the serious danger incurred by man from the use of tuberculous milk, but it would not be an adequate security. The presence in the dairy of a tuberculous cow, as Drs. Martin and Woodhead have shown, is a decided source of danger to the public, especially having regard to what we have learnt respecting the rapid development of tuberculosis in the udder, and the degree of danger to milk consumers incurred by the invasion of the udder in tuberculous cows."

To give effect in London to the recommendations of the second Commission, which are to guard the milk consumer from the risks pointed out by the first Commission, the following administration is necessary.

The owners of cows in London will be required to notify to the Council every case of disease of the udder. The Council will employ a veterinary inspector, who will examine such cows with a view to determining the nature of the disease, and if this be found to be tuberculous the cows will be slaughtered. Periodical inspection of cows in cowsheds will be needed with a view to enforcing the requirement of notification, and with a view to the Council requiring the slaughter of all cows affected with tuberculosis of the udder or exhibiting clinical symptoms of tuberculosis. If, when the animal is slaughtered, it is found that there has been error in diagnosis, the Council will compensate the owner of the cow.

Samples of milk, either produced in London, or coming from without and sold in London, will be taken, and milk vendors will be required to supply sufficient information as to the sources from which the milk is derived. If such milk is found to be tuberculous the Council will require from the local authority in whose district the cows are situated "full information and veterinary reports concerning the cows, byres, &c.," and if dissatisfied with the report will, with the sanction of the Local Government Board, make an independent inspection of such cows. For the purposes of this administration the Council will require the aid of a laboratory in which the milk can be examined.

Similar action will of course be taken by other authorities outside London, and hence the sale of tuberculous milk will be limited.

As I have already said, there is no opposition to the Committee's recommendations on this head, and it is earnestly to be desired, in the interest of the public health, that these recommendations will be adopted by the Council.

Meat.

I now come to the subject of meat inspection. It cannot be said that there is no opposition to the recommendations of the Committee here, for although the necessity of meat inspection was recognised by the several gentlemen who addressed the Committee, they all objected on various grounds to the slaughter of animals in public slaughterhouses, in which alone meat can be properly and systematically inspected, and claimed that private slaughterhouses should continue to exist.

It must be pointed out in the first instance that the need for more thorough and systematic inspection of meat in London and the country generally does not depend only upon the necessity of preventing the sale of tuberculous meat. Meat may be unfit for human food and dangerous to human health from many causes, and this has been so much recognised on the continent that before there was any knowledge that tuberculous food could cause tuberculosis in man, provision was made for the slaughter of animals in public slaughterhouses. I mention this because among the reasons urged for the retention of private slaughterhouses was the statement that the opinion as to the amount of risk from tuberculous meat had been greatly exaggerated and that this risk is insignificant. Upon this it is sufficient to point to the fact that the last Royal Commission on Tuberculosis has recommended the abolition of private slaughterhouses, and the slaughter of animals in public slaughterhouses, on the sole ground of the risk of the consumption of tuberculous meat. The first Commission showed this risk, pointed out that the meat might easily be contaminated at the time of slaughter with material derived from other diseased parts, and, as the result of experiment, showed also that while "*ordinary processes of cooking applied to meat which has got contaminated on the surface are probably* "*sufficient to destroy the harmful qualities, they would not avail to render wholesome any piece of meat* "*that contained tuberculous matter in its deeper parts.*"

The especial danger of the use of raw meat juice by delicate children is pointed to by the Commission.

It is pointed out by the deputations that the last Commission showed that with increasing consumption of meat there is decreasing mortality from tuberculous disease at the meat-eating ages, and there was apparently forgetfulness by the speakers of the fact that this decrease is due to amelioration of conditions, which in combination have a more potent influence on the production of tuberculosis than meat has. While admitting that the views as to risk were some years ago exaggerated by some persons, there still remains, I submit, a substantial risk to the meat consumer from tuberculous meat,

and this is sufficient to demand a careful inspection of carcases at the time of slaughter by skilled meat inspectors. Obviously, inspection of this sort cannot be made in private slaughterhouses. That this inspection is necessary is, as I have said, recognised by the last Commission, who have included it in their recommendations.*

I may now point out briefly the result of the adoption by the Council of the recommendations of the Committee as to meat inspection, these recommendations agreeing with those of the last Royal Commission on Tuberculosis.

The flesh of all animals killed in London would be inspected in the public slaughterhouses in which the animals would be slaughtered. This meat after examination would be stamped, and, at the convenience of the butchers, either stored in cold chambers or removed to the butchers' shops. No cattle would be driven through the streets; they would be conveyed by railway from the Islington market, or from markets outside London, to the slaughterhouses, where they would pass into the hands of the purchasers, whose men could be employed in their slaughter.

The meat arriving dead in London would, if killed, inspected and stamped in public slaughterhouses in other parts of the country, be taken direct to the meat market or butchers' shops. Meat which is killed in private slaughterhouses outside London would not have this guarantee of its fitness for food, and would therefore be required to be taken to meat inspection stations, where it would be stamped as fit or condemned as unfit for food. It is especially this meat that needs inspection, for in the absence of any proper system of inspection, there is nothing to prevent the introduction into London of meat of dangerous quality, and there is indeed no doubt that London does receive such meat from other parts of England. There is not the least prospect that Parliament would give control over this meat until there is a complete system for the examination of all meat killed in London.

The system here described is in no sense untried, it is in active operation on the continent, where, as the result of a number of years' experience, it is found not only a valuable protection to the public, but acceptable to all honest butchers. It is, moreover, the only system which meets a very legitimate grievance of butchers, to which the attention of the Committee and the Tuberculosis Commission was directed by the butchers' trade, viz , that men are employed as meat inspectors who have not the proper knowledge, and that there is great want of uniformity in the action of local officers in seizing meat as unfit for food. The inspection of meat in public slaughterhouses can be done by competent veterinary officers without undue cost to the public, and uniformity of procedure can in large degree be ensured.

The objections of the deputations were, however, directed in the main to the abolition of private slaughterhouses, and among those urged was that this abolition would "practically destroy the purchase of English farmers' cattle," for "the only customer practically so far as London is concerned, is the man who has a private slaughterhouse of his own"; the Metropolitan Cattle Market of the City Corporation "might almost as well shut its gates"; butchers "would neither take the trouble nor would they go to the extraordinary expense and inconvenience of sending their servants to a public slaughterhouse in order that they might slaughter the animals which have been bought."

Mr. W. Cooper, in his evidence before the last Tuberculosis Commission, explained that the decrease in private slaughterhouses in London which has taken place was due to change in the food requirements of the poorer classes of the London population.† The falling off in the number of animals received into the Islington market (see Appendix I. to my report on Slaughterhouses) is evidence that this trade is under existing conditions slowly but surely dying out. If action is to be taken in the interest of the English farmer the question which needs consideration is whether this trade could be revived by the provision of public slaughterhouses which would give opportunity for the slaughtering of cattle to the numerous butchers who have no private slaughterhouses.‡ The substitution of public for the 425 private slaughterhouses now existing would give opportunity to some 4,500 London butchers who have no slaughterhouses to buy and kill home-produced cattle. Certainly unless some such step be taken it may be expected that the importation of English farmers' live cattle into London will eventually practically cease.

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* Mr. William Cooper, Chairman, Meat and Cattle Trades Section of the London Chamber of Commerce, in a letter to the *Times* (13 January, 1899), states that the seizure of tuberculous carcases in the Central Meat Market is not a perceptible percentage of the enormous quantity of beef dealt with. It needs to be pointed out (*a*) that much of the meat that enters the market has passed through the slaughterhouses in the Deptford and Islington markets, where it has already been liable to inspection by the City Corporation officers. For the rest, inspection of the carcases in the market *after removal of the viscera*, is no sufficient guarantee that the animals were not tuberculous. The first Royal Commission on Tuberculosis reported that they had reason to think that the facts about tuberculous animals in the United Kingdom would exhibit a broad resemblance to those in Copenhagen and Berlin. In Berlin the percentages of tuberculous animals were, oxen and cows 15·1, swine 1·55, calves 0·11; and the percentages of the several kinds of animals condemned on account of tuberculosis were, for oxen and cows 1·26, swine 0·23, calves 0·06. In Copenhagen the percentage for tuberculous oxen and cows was 17·7, and for swine 15·3.

† 1996.—Why are they [private slaughterhouses] diminishing? That is very easily explained: Thirty years ago, the dead meat trade had scarcely begun. The year 1866 was the year of the cattle plague, and I think that was the thing which gave the dead meat trade its first stimulant by the slaughtering of animals in the country, and the sending them to London. Then another thing which has revolutionised the trade is the large imports of frozen mutton. All the coarse parts of bullocks now have become unpopular with the lower orders. The lower orders in London used to be content at one time to eat what we term the coarse parts, that is to say, the interior portions of bullocks. Now there is a great difficulty indeed in getting rid of such things in many parts of London, and butchers who used to slaughter cattle cannot possibly sell the whole of the carcase, so they go to the market and buy as they like in the dead meat market what suits their trade, and they buy that only. That has given a great impetus indeed to the dead meat trade, so that has in a measure revolutionised the trade. Now, since the arrival of these enormous quantities of foreign meat, as I say, the English farmer with his live meat trade has been practically almost driven out of the trade.

‡ It was stated to the Committee by Mr. Coggan, chairman of the Butchers' Trade Society, that there are about 5,000 butchers in London. There are 425 private slaughterhouses—hence there are about twelve butchers without, to one butcher with, a private slaughterhouse.

Mr. Hart, of the Central Meat and Poultry Markets Association, urged that the establishment of public slaughterhouses, requiring greater handling and carriage of recently killed meat, would "destroy the unique characteristics of home-killed meat." I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that, if meat were to be treated in the public slaughterhouses after killing and in its subsequent carriage in the same manner as I have seen it treated in this country, there is ample ground for this contention. The slovenly and disgusting habit of piling the carcases into carts, the driver often sitting upon the carcases, is, however, in marked contrast to the manner in which meat is treated in well-ordered foreign cities. Slaughtered in large, well-ventilated halls, conveyed by well-arranged machinery into cooling rooms where the meat is allowed to set, stored, if the butcher desires it, in his own compartment in a cold chamber, and conveyed subsequently to his premises in specially constructed well-ventilated vans, from the roof of which the meat hangs—are conditions unknown in this country. The amount of handling to which the carcase is subjected in a well-ordered continental public slaughterhouse is trifling compared with that to which it is now subjected here.

There would be no difficulty in introducing with the public slaughterhouse this cleaner and better method of treating the meat, and the advantage of the public over the private slaughterhouse would be soon recognised by the trade.

Reference was also made to the supposed loss of the offal which would result from the abolition of private slaughterhouses. I have already said that the offal would not be lost, it would be as available as before. Deptford now supplies offal to London, and the offal from any new public slaughterhouses would no doubt be equally available. That other meat seriously enters into competition with offal is, however, very evident.*

Again reference was also made to the alleged difficulty butchers would experience in not being able to employ their own men in the public slaughterhouses, but this, as I have before said, is an erroneous impression. Mr. Learner, of the Norfolk Agricultural Society, who expressed to the Committee his anxieties about his own trade as a stockowner, when he was told that the men employed in the public slaughterhouses could be the servants of the butchers, replied, "I do not understand they would be there. If they would, that would put a different face on it altogether, but as I understand they would appoint a body of slaughtermen and people to do the work in the market." He expressed, however, the opinion that butchers would be unwilling to avail themselves of this opportunity.

Mr. Coggan, the chairman of the Butchers' Trade Society, called attention to the financial aspect of the Committee's proposals, and stated that he estimated that the slaughterhouses would cost a million sterling, which, with expenses of management, would amount to £60,000 annually, whereas, assuming an inspector at a salary of £150 a year was appointed for every ten private slaughterhouses, the total expenditure would amount to £6,000 a year.

I am at a loss to understand how the estimate of one million is arrived at, and I find that the memorial of the meat and cattle trade section of the Chamber of Commerce mentions "an initial outlay of probably one million and a-half sterling." I can only conclude it is based on the assumption that public slaughterhouses will have to be provided for the total London population of 4½ millions of inhabitants instead of for the comparatively small proportion of the population which now derives its meat supply from private slaughterhouses in London. I am, thanks to the courtesy of the chairman of the Central Markets Committee of the City Corporation, able to make a rough estimate of the proportion in which the meat supplied from private slaughterhouses stands to the total meat supply to London, and I find this estimate points to less than 10 per cent. Using the figures of Osthoff, who has had especial experience of the cost of construction of public slaughterhouses in Germany, I am led to the conclusion that to provide slaughterhouses to meet London requirements would cost the Council less than some improvements undertaken by the Council under the Housing of the Working Classes Act. From the health point of view such expenditure on public slaughterhouses would be incomparably more valuable. Such slaughterhouses would serve the purpose of meat inspection stations to which meat arriving dead in London and not consigned to the City markets would be taken. Beyond these stations there would not be need of more than two or three meat inspection stations. These would be situated near the principal railway stations, and the cost of each might be thought of as comparable to the cost of one of the Council's offices for the inspection of weights and measures. I have already shown in my report on public slaughterhouses that fees would be charged for their use; fees would also be charged for the inspection of meat. Members of the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis who visited Germany reported that "all the public slaughterhouses in Germany are self supporting." I see no reason why public slaughterhouses in London, conducted on similar lines, should not also be self supporting.

The appointment of an inspector to every ten private slaughterhouses would in no way meet the requirements of the case. For proper inspection it is necessary to ensure that no killing shall be done without the knowledge and inspection of the officer. The proposed system of inspection of private slaughterhouses would give no guarantee of this. Different butchers would be killing at the same time and the services of the inspector would not be available. In Germany it has been found impracticable properly to inspect meat in the public slaughterhouses in which each butcher has a separate killing chamber, and it has been decided to reconstruct such slaughterhouses at great cost on account of this disability. How much more impossible would the inspection be if these killing chambers were in different streets! Attention was especially directed to this faulty construction of public slaughterhouses by the last Royal Commission on Tuberculosis (*vide* their report, paragraph 32).

Reference was also made to the impracticability of carrying out an efficient system of marking the meat after inspection in terms which showed very little acquaintance with the procedure adopted in this respect on the Continent. There is no reason that what is an every-day piece of work abroad should be impracticable in this country.

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* Mr. W. Cooper informed the Public Health Committee that a gentleman on his committee only the other day told him "that he would be prepared to supply anyone with a ton of wholesome mutton at twopence a pound.

The meat and cattle trade section urges that "the abolition of private slaughterhouses would result in the whole British cattle, sheep, &c., trade of London passing into the hands of a limited number of wholesale firms, who would be able to control the trade to the detriment alike of the British producer and the consumer." In reply I would beg to point out that the provision of public slaughterhouses in which every butcher will be able to slaughter is a sufficient safeguard. If the London butcher finds he can buy live cattle and kill them in the public slaughterhouses at less cost to him than by buying carcases from the wholesale firms, he will undoubtedly do so. He may, as stated by some, be unwilling to take the trouble to adopt this course while he can buy meat equally cheap from a wholesale firm, but these firms would not have a monopoly of the slaughterhouses, which would serve as an effectual control.

One deputation, through its spokesman (Mr. Coggan) urged that, if the subject be dealt with at all, it must be done by the Government, and must be a scheme for the entire kingdom. The Committee at the present time is not asking for special legislation for London, but is advising the Council to inform the Local Government Board that the Council will be prepared to accept in London the responsibility of the administration which the Royal Commission on Tuberculosis recommends.

When the Government introduces a bill to give effect to these recommendations, which, in the interest of the public health is urgently needed throughout the country, it may be hoped that the necessary powers may be conferred upon the Council for safeguarding the London population against risks from unwholesome milk and meat. The effect of such action would no doubt be to ensure the slaughter in public slaughterhouses, and the inspection at the time of slaughter in all parts of the country, of the great majority of the cattle which now go to the butcher.

Since these deputations have been received, deputations of butchers have waited on the London sanitary authorities and memorials have been addressed by the butchers' trade with the result that in addition to the deputations from the trade associations which the Public Health Committee has received, the Council has received communications objecting to the committees proposals from the Vestries of Paddington, Lewisham, St. George the Martyr, Kensington, St. Pancras, Clerkenwell, St. Luke, Lambeth, Westminster, Stoke Newington and Rotherhithe; the District Boards of Holborn, Poplar, Wandsworth, St. Olave, Lee, and Whitechapel; and from the Agricultural Societies of Leicestershire, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Worcestershire, Norfolk, the Royal Counties, Wiltshire; the Bedfordshire, Norfolk, East Suffolk and Gloucester Chambers of Agriculture; the National and the Hampshire Down Sheep Breeders' Associations; the Farmers, Fareham and Hants Farmers', and the Smithfield Clubs, the Butchers Company, and the Meat and Cattle Trade Section of the Chamber of Commerce.

The sanitary authorities do not in every case state the grounds of their objections. Some of them, however, give reasons, and to these reference may be made, thus—

The Clerkenwell Vestry refer to the "enormous cost" of public slaughterhouse provision. I have already dealt with this question. The vestry urge that there will be increase in the price of meat. It is obvious that a change which would cause less than a tenth of the butchers in London to slaughter in public instead of private slaughterhouses, cannot possibly affect the price of meat. The vestry further state that it will be impossible for English meat to be distinguished from foreign, whereas the system proposed is the only one which will enable such distinction to be made; that "only a very small proportion of the meat consumed will be brought under the inspection of the Council's officers," whereas the system proposed will bring under inspection the whole of the meat which is now not subject to the inspection of the officers of the City Corporation; that property in the neighbourhood of the proposed public slaughterhouses will be depreciated, concerning which it may be stated that apart from the fact that this question has been carefully studied in selecting the sites I have proposed, the following extract from the architect's report on public slaughterhouses in Germany may be cited, "although care has been taken to keep these great establishments away from private buildings, there is, so far as I can see, no objection on the part of private persons to build and live near the markets and abattoirs, for new streets are laid out, and new groups of factories, shops, offices, and residences are erected, and, in fact, new suburbs are springing up close to the entrance gates. This results no doubt partly from the business which springs up in connection with such establishments, but it is largely due to the attention which has been devoted to their appearance, and to their freedom from any cause of offence."

The Vestry of Kensington base their objections on the grounds (*a*) that private slaughterhouses are decreasing in number, and that a minimum of slaughtering is carried on in some; and (*b*) that the vestry are "impressed with the futility of any efforts having for their object the suppression of tuberculosis by the inspection of meat, whilst no arrangements are in operation for the supervision of milk and of the cows from which it is taken." To (*a*) it may be replied that in 1892 there were 537 private slaughterhouses; in 1898, 425. If private slaughterhouses continued to decrease at this rate, in 23 years no private slaughterhouses would remain. But in 1874 there were some 1,500 private slaughterhouses, and in 1892 there were 537, *i.e.*, the average decrease was more than 51 a year. Since 1892, however, the average decrease has been less than 19 a year. The rate of decrease is therefore largely diminishing, and will continue largely to diminish, and in all probability private slaughterhouses will continue to exist until the representative body of London by some definite act brings their existence to an end. To (*b*) it may be replied that the Committee's proposals deal with milk as well as meat.

The District Board of Poplar are of opinion that a proper system of inspection and marking of the meat would be sufficient, but apparently do not appreciate the impossibility of this being done, unless there is inspection at the time of slaughter, and that such inspection is impossible unless the animals are killed in a public slaughterhouse.

The District Board of St. Olave, and the Vestries of Rotherhithe and Stoke Newington refer to the "enormous cost" with which I have already dealt. The St. Olave District Board refers also to the danger of seriously affecting the interests of British farmers and agriculturalists, which, if affected at

all, will I believe be promoted by giving opportunity for slaughtering to the 4,500 butchers in London who now have no slaughterhouses.

The Vestry of Rotherhithe fear also an increase in the price of meat, which I have discussed already in connection with Clerkenwell.

The Vestry of Stoke Newington express the opinion that an official inspection of meat could be obtained without the establishment of public slaughterhouses. This point I have already dealt with.

The Vestry of St. Pancras "are in favour of public slaughterhouses, but do not desire the suppression of properly conducted private establishments."

The Vestry of St. George-the-Martyr have no evidence before them which enables them to support the proposals of the Committee.

The District Board of Wandsworth are of opinion that "the recommendations of the Royal Commission can only be satisfactorily carried out by provisions extending over the whole country." It may be hoped that the Government by the introduction of a bill will enable this to be done.

The communications of the agricultural societies do not touch any other points than those previously mentioned. They express in the main a plea that the supply of home-produced cattle to traders will be prejudiced.

While objection is being shown to the recommendations of the Committee by the butchers' trade associations, it is well to point out that the provision of public slaughterhouses was urged before the late Royal Commission on Tuberculosis by numerous witnesses as necessary in the interest of the stockowner and the butcher as well as in the interest of the public health. Thus, in addition to the witnesses who were members of the medical and veterinary professions, who expressed opinions in favour of public slaughterhouses, may be mentioned Mr. Benjamin St. John Ackers, chairman of the Cattle Diseases Committee of the Central and Associated Chambers of Agriculture, and chairman of the Farmers' Club; Mr. James Scarlett, president of the Paisley United Fleshers' Society; Mr. John Bell, president of the Carlisle and District Butchers' and Insurance Association; Mr. George Jackson Ward, butcher, of Middleton, who spoke for the wholesale trade, and Mr. John Dobbie, who appeared on behalf of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture.

Beyond this, the Vestry of Battersea support the Committee's recommendations, and the Vestry of Islington have informed the Council that they have approved and adopted the suggestions of their medical officer of health, Dr. A. E. Harris, who has given the following reasons for the adoption by the Council of the Public Health Committee's recommendations—

1. *Hygienic reasons.*

(*a*) That the erection of such buildings would remove nuisances from the neighbourhood of dwelling houses.
(*b*) That it would exclude putrifiable matter from the sewers.
(*c*) That it would protect meat from the liability to exposure from foul emanations.
(*d*) That it would ensure the thorough examination of all meat for disease.
(*e*) That it would materially tend to limit the traffic in diseased meat.

2. *Economic reasons.*

(*a*) That the meat would be less liable to spoil, because slaughtered under better conditions.
(*b*) That much blood and offal now lost would be entirely saved.
(*c*) That there would be a saving from order, the proper division of labour, avoidance of driving animals through the streets, and the doing of business on a large scale.
(*d*) That abattoirs properly managed yield a fair profit.

3. *Humanitarian reasons.*

(*a*) That much of the cruelty to animals that now occurs would be put an end to, owing to the use of improved appliances for slaughtering.
(*b*) That the driving of weary and exhausted cattle through our streets would be avoided, owing to the abattoirs being situated near railway stations.
(*c*) That the street danger to the public would be greatly lessened, if not altogether eliminated.

The recommendations of the Committee are, moreover, supported by—

1. Sir Samuel Wilks, Sir William MacCormac, and Sir William Broadbent, on behalf of the National Association for the Prevention of Consumption, who express the opinion that "if the Council takes steps to prevent the sale of tubercle-infected milk in London and ensures the proper examination of meat by the substitution of public for private slaughterhouses, there is every prospect of reducing the present mortality from tuberculosis, especially among the poor, who more particularly suffer from the effects of meat and milk of dangerous quality."
2. The Sanitary Institute of Great Britain.
3. The National Health Society.
4. The Humanitarian League.
5. The Church Society for the Promotion of Kindness to Animals.
6. The London Model Abattoir Society.
7. The Church Sanitary Association.
8. The Poplar Labour League, the North Camberwell Radical Club and Institute, and the Mildmay Radical Club and Institute.

I may also submit extracts from Sir Richard Thorne's recent Harben lecture, which are to the following effect—

"How is the very proper demand of the butchers for uniformity in the conditions regulating "the seizure of carcases on account of tuberculosis to be met? How is such skilful handling of slightly "tuberculous carcases to be attained as will secure the removal of the diseased portions in such a way "that no risk shall attach to the remainder? I only know one answer, namely, by the abolition, as "far as practicable, of private slaughterhouses, by the provision in all large centres of population,

" whether technically styled urban or rural, of public slaughterhouses under the direct control of the " sanitary authorities and their officers, and by the adoption of measures which will, as soon as " practicable, provide a class of skilled meat inspectors."

" The properly administered public slaughterhouse is demanded as an act of justice to those " trading in meat; it is demanded in the interests of public health and decency; it is demanded for the " prevention of cruelty to the lower animals; and it is demanded in order to bring England, if not the " United Kingdom, somewhat nearer to the level of other civilised nations in this matter."

" Public slaughterhouses, officered by skilled inspectors, and supervised by medical officers of " health, are urgently required, amongst other reasons, for the prevention of tuberculosis in man."

While the objections of the deputations who attended before the Committee and of the memorialists of the Council deserve every consideration, I submit that they afford no substantial reason for reconsideration of the recommendations the Committee have made to the Council. They are of the sort that are always urged when there is any question affecting the meat trade; thus, when it was proposed to move the live cattle market from Smithfield to Islington this was vigorously opposed by the butchers' trade societies, and, had they been successful, Londoners would now be exposed to the risk and annoyance of tens of thousands of cattle being driven through the streets to central London. Again, when there was a proposal to slaughter at Deptford all the foreign cattle on arrival, the Select Committee by whom the Foreign Cattle Markets Bill was considered were informed that compulsory slaughter at the water-side would have the effect of stopping to a large extent the importation of cattle; that butchers would rather buy a live beast in the English market and take it to their private slaughterhouse than a dead beast in the foreign market; that the offal would be lost; that it was impossible to supply London from a dead meat market; that competition and consequently prices would fall at the foreign market; that the foreign producer would not send his cattle there, and that the foreign market would soon come to an end, &c. The lapse of time has sufficed to show the amount of importance which attaches to such objections. The Deptford market has proved a success not only to the Corporation of the City of London, but has contributed in important degree to the meat supply of the whole of London, while the private slaughterhouses have continually decreased in number. The meat trade has fallen into line with the new conditions, and will do so again.

The only obstacle which now remains to proper meat inspection is the existence of some 400 more or less used private slaughterhouses, supplying less than a tenth of the meat sold in London. The cessation of their existence is urgently needed. The last Royal Commission recommend that when any local authority has provided a public slaughterhouse, power should be given them to close private slaughterhouses, except that a period of three years be allowed to the owners of existing registered private slaughterhouses to apply their premises to other purposes.

The position of London is somewhat exceptional, seeing that more than one public slaughterhouse would be required to give the owners of private slaughterhouses a reasonable alternative. Certainly it is absolutely necessary that private slaughterhouses should cease to exist in London, and I believe future requirements could be better considered when definite arrangements have been made for that purpose.

Milk and meat.

I may add one last reason for the adoption by the Council of the Committee's recommendations, although it has little direct reference to London, but is all important in its indirect effects. The Royal Commission on Tuberculosis recommend that the Board of Agriculture give stock owners opportunity for the testing of their animals by furnishing them under certain conditions with a gratuitous supply of tuberculin and the gratuitous services of a veterinary surgeon, the object being to to eliminate tuberculous animals from the stock and enable them to be isolated. Mr. Walter Long recently stated that no evidence had as yet been placed before him of the desire of stock-owners to have such aid. It would appear, therefore, that so long as tuberculous milk and meat can be sold without let or hindrance, this most necessary step will not be taken by stock owners, and tuberculous milk and meat will continue to be supplied to the consumer. I need not point out to the Committee the great influence the Council can exercise by active and judicious administration of the powers referred to above. If difficulty is put in the way of the sale of tuberculous milk and meat to the London population—nearly a seventh of the population of England and Wales—it cannot be doubted that stock owners will see the necessity in their own interest of making every effort to eliminate tuberculosis from their herds, and thus bring about, not only the protection of the inhabitants of London, but of those of other communities.

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